

Good afternoon.

My name is Christopher Trombly. I serve on the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at Southern Connecticut State University.

Additionally, I serve on the board of directors of Connecticut CASA, an organization that prepares and supervises Court-Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children and adolescents who are involved with Connecticut's Superior Court of Juvenile Matters.

I also serve on the board of directors of Connecticut ASCD – the state affiliate of ASCD, formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, which spearheaded the Whole Child initiative nearly a decade and one-half ago.

I appear before you, today, to voice my support for Senate Bill 2.

It has become commonplace for people to cite the pandemic as having shone a bright light on the needs of so many children and families across the nation generally, and Connecticut specifically – commonplace, but no less accurate.

The pandemic has also served to illuminate precisely how over-reliant upon schools and educators government – at all levels – has become in meeting the needs of families. Policymakers have, as I've written elsewhere, “‘educationalized’ our nation's most insidious social problems, placing responsibility [for solving them] on our schools and educators” all while equipping them with too few resources with which to undertake that work.

Connecticut has the regrettable distinction of being in the top five states for both per capita income, and income inequality. That inequality is manifested in the state's schools every day – with some schools having very few if any students from families with low incomes, and others serving only children from families with low incomes and even less wealth.

The merits of the legislation under consideration are many. Among them are:

- its recognition of the importance of ongoing, job-embedded professional development for educators;
- its identification of students' social and emotional needs as an area in which educators require opportunities to acquire greater competence and deeper confidence;
- its emphasis on enhancing communication and strengthening relationships between educators and the families of the students whom they serve;
- its provision to educators with compendia of supports and services to share with families who are in need of them;
- and the establishment of a much-needed task force to assess the needs of children, and the degree to which the state's various agencies and organizations are (or are not yet) helping to meet them.

If all of Connecticut's children are to come to school ready to be **engaged, supported, and challenged** in their learning by the educators who love and serve them, their families and neighborhoods must first be afforded the ability to help them to be **healthy and safe**. This legislation represents a major step toward making that a reality. -- No less important will be the General Assembly's and Governor's ongoing commitments to ensuring enhanced funding for the many worthwhile provisions of this bill and other measures pertaining to children and families, as well as to the state's schools.